



Self-Management Guide

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What are the benefits of self-management?

Self-management enables you to maximise the genuine choice and control you have over the supports and services you use if youⁱ are approved to self-manage parts of your WA NDIS My Way plan. You can plan, design, direct and organise these services and supports to meet your needs and your preferences.

Self-managing your funding can also provide the chance to build confidence in your abilities to manage your affairs.

What is self-management?

Self-management of your WA NDIS My Way plan funding means:

1. You receive the funding into your bank account
2. You buy the supports included in your plan and pay for them from your bank account
3. You make sure the strategies in your plan to keep you safe and healthy are carried out
4. You take responsibility for the quality of what you buy
5. You keep records of how the money has been spent and show that you have completed what is required.

Your My Way Coordinator or the My Way Technical Officer will discuss the options for managing funding. They will also go through the tasks that go with managing your own funds. If you wish to self-manage some, or all, of your plan's funding, WA NDIS My Way is committed to helping to make this happen where possible.

What must you do?

Self-management of funding provides greater independence, choice and control, but also comes with greater responsibility.

1. Managing your funding

In line with the Disability Services Act 1993, people have to enter into a written agreement with the Commission to receive funding. To self-manage, the agreement with the Commission is:

- your signed Individual Plan, and
- a signed 'Acceptance of Grant Funds Terms and Conditions' form (attached to the end of this document).

The 'Acceptance of Grant Funds Terms and Conditions' is signed and applies to WA NDIS My Way Individual Plans. The Acceptance document is signed by you and your My Way Coordinator and is kept in the My Way office.

Money is put into your bank account to provide a maximum of 12 weeks support at a time. The amount paid may change depending on:

- the total amount of money in your plan (if it's a small amount, we may decide to advance the money in one payment),
- the timing of the supports you will buy with the money (if you are buying supports at a particular time, such as a piece of equipment, the money will be advanced in the regular payment before the planned purchase), and
- how well you have been able to self-manage in the past (if you have had challenges with self-managing funds, smaller amounts of money may be advanced to you more regularly, until you are able and feel confident to manage larger sums).

It is highly recommended that you keep a separate bank account for self-managed money.

2. Buying the agreed supports

You can buy the supports as approved in your plan.

Hiring a support worker

There are different ways to hire a worker directly. You can engage someone as an employee, an independent contractor or as an employee of their own business.

Understanding these ways of employing people is important, as it means there may be different requirements for things like tax, superannuation and insurances. It is your responsibility to make sure you meet these requirements. You may wish to get more information about these obligations. One place to start is the Australian Taxation Office website (www.ato.gov.au) which has information on hiring workers as employees or contractors.

My Way Coordinators can suggest other information which will help you, but they cannot give financial or legal advice.

Employing Family Members

Employing family members may lead to conflicts of interest and negatively impact on family relationships, undermining the natural support role that families play in the lives of people with disability. As such, the payment of family members as support workers will be approved only in exceptional circumstances. For more information, see the Family Members as Paid Support Workers Policy on the Commission website ([http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/Global/Publications/About%20us/Policies/family%20members%20as%20paid%20support%20workers%20policy%20\(i37\)%20feb%202012.doc](http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/Global/Publications/About%20us/Policies/family%20members%20as%20paid%20support%20workers%20policy%20(i37)%20feb%202012.doc)).

Support Worker Checks

It is important that people hired to provide care to a person with disability are suitable and able to do this safely. While no procedure can absolutely ensure people will be free from harm, there are official checks that should be undertaken of the person you select as your support worker **before they start work with you**. These checks are:

- The **National Police Certificate** lists a person's criminal and WA traffic court convictions and any charges before the court at the time the National Police Certificate is requested. For more information see the Western Australian Police website (<http://www.police.wa.gov.au/OurServices/PoliceChecks/NationalPoliceCertificates/tabid/1339/Default.aspx>).
- Where the support worker will be working with a child, the worker must have applied for, or already been issued with, a **Working With Children Card**. This is a legal requirement. For more information see the Working with Children Check website (<http://www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au/checkwwc>).

Interviews

Interviews are an opportunity for you to meet with support workers applying for the job and work out if the person is suitable. There are a number of sample questions which can be asked to test whether a potential worker will be a good match for the job. Please refer to the 'other resources' section below.

Referee reports

You should always seek written references for the person you are thinking about hiring as a support worker and speak with their referees. You can find out things such as whether the person is reliable, dependable, trustworthy and has the skills for the work you would like them to do.

Directly supervise and guide workers

You can provide valuable information and direction on your care and preferences to your new support worker. Talking about things like a trial period, training and supervision levels may help in the beginning when agreeing the working arrangements with your new support worker.

It is recommended that you develop a very clear statement of the tasks that you are requiring from the support worker and how you would like them to be carried out. It is also useful to provide regular feedback to the support worker about how well they are doing their job and let them know about their progress. You could also hold regular one-to-one meetings with your support worker to discuss any issues or concerns either of you might have.

Other resources

Some booklets are available to help people, family and carers with hiring support people:

- Carers WA 'A Guide for Family Carers about Getting Supports' (2012) covers topics such as advertising, interviewing and legal responsibilities. This and other booklets are available on the Carers WA website (<http://www.carerswa.asn.au/resources/A-guide-for-family-carers-about-getting-supports.pdf>).
- My Place (WA) 'A Guide to Engaging your own Support Workers' covers topics such as preparing a budget, weekly plan and rosters, advertising, training and managing support workers. This is available on the My Place (WA) website (<http://www.myplace.org.au/yourself.html>).
- WA's Individualised Services 'Shared Management: A Guide for Support Organisations supporting shared management' includes information about responsibilities of employing workers. This guide is available on the WAI S website (<http://waindividualisedservices.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Sharedmanagementmanual-Final-3.9.13.pdf>).

Choosing an organisation to provide a service

Some steps you may wish to take when choosing an organisation to provide a service:

- Gather information and ask others about service providers or organisations in your area. This may include internet research, talking to other people or families and discussing options with your My Way Coordinator
- Talk to and meet with a range of providers
- Look for services that will best suit you and your family depending on your particular needs and how you think your individual goals and strategies can be achieved. It may help to consider;
 - How comfortable did you feel with the service / staff?
 - What are the qualifications, skills and experience of the organisation and its workers? Will there be staff available when you need support?
 - How will the organisation ensure it provides a high quality service to you?
 - Does the price fit within what the Commission will pay or will you need to pay some of the cost yourself?
 - What are the other options? Is this the only provider or are there other good choices?

3. Keeping safe and protected

There may be parts of your plan that aim to protect your human rights, choice and control, and wellbeing. These protections need to be carried out by you as part of self-managing your plan.

Some things in your plan may help develop your confidence and willingness to speak up, ensuring that you are heard, that your rights and opinions are respected and you have control over your life. Other parts of your plan may assist in strengthening your connections with other people and general community services, or could also be more formalised, such as being linked to an advocacy service. More information is available on the Commission's Position Paper on Individual Safeguarding available on the Commission's website (<http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/disability-service-providers-/for-disability-service-providers/quality-system/safeguarding/>).

4. Service quality

Who is responsible for the quality of my services?

You are responsible for the quality of the supports and services you have purchased when you are self-managing your funding.

How to check quality

You are the best person to decide if you are receiving quality care. If you are managing funding on behalf of a family member, the person receiving care is the best source of information as to how satisfied they feel about the care and supports being provided.

Some questions to think about:

- Effectiveness – are the supports/care helping me to reach the goals that are in my plan?
- Safety – am I and my worker safe in the way the supports/care being provided to me?
- Individual - do I feel that the care is focussed on my needs and is it clearly discussed with me? Is it flexible enough to my needs? Are the supports meeting my needs?
- Interactions – am I being respected and treated with dignity?

Observation

Where a person may not be able to clearly communicate how they feel about the care and supports being provided, supervising staff and watching the service being delivered is useful to assess quality in these situations.

If an organisation has been chosen to provide a service, it is likely that they have a quality system in place. Asking them about these systems could help you judge the quality of services that are provided.

When situations are not going as planned

If you think that the supports and services are not being delivered the way you had planned, you should first speak with the support worker or service provider. You can also contact your My Way Coordinator for support or advice.

Importantly, if there is a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the person with disability, the person must be made safe immediately and the situation should be discussed with the police, the Department for Child Protection and Family Support (for children) and/or the local hospital. You may also wish to speak to your My Way Coordinator for support. Where appropriate, the issue or concern may be referred to the My Way Regional Director or to the Commission's State-wide Specialist Services, consistent with the Commission's 'People at Risk' Policy.

Useful contacts in urgent situations:

Western Australia Police: 131 444 (24 hours)

Sexual Assault Resource Centre: 9340 1828 / 1800 199 888 (24 hours)

Crisis Care Helpline: 9223 111(metro), 1800 199 008 (country)

Mental Health Emergency Response Line (after hours): 1300 555 788 (metro), 1800 676 822 (Peel), Rurallink 1800 552 002 (rural and remote)

Healthdirect Australia: 1800 022 222

National After Hours GP Helpline: 1800 022 222.

Other Useful Contacts:

Department for Child Protection and Family Support: 9222 2555 (metro), 1800 622 258 (country) (Monday to Friday)

Office of the Public Advocate: 1300 858 455 (Monday to Friday)

5. Accounting for how the money has been spent and other requirements

Funding in WA NDIS My Way has to meet certain Western Australian legislation such as the Financial Management Act 2006 and the Disability Services Act 1993.

All funding provided through WA NDIS My Way must be checked to ensure:

1. the funds were used as agreed; and
2. that all Commission funds are accounted for.

The My Way Technical Officer, who is located in the My Way office, will help you to show that the funding has been spent against the supports in your plan.

It is your responsibility to spend your self-managed funds on your agreed plan supports, and to keep proper records of these purchases or payments.

1. Funds were used as agreed:

Your plan will be reviewed at least every 12 months. The self-management of funding will be reviewed as part of the overall plan review.

If your My Way Coordinator or the My Way Technical Officer becomes aware that the money is not being used for the agreed purpose, you may be required to repay these funds and it is unlikely that you will be approved to self-manage any amount of funding in the future.

2. All Commission funds are accounted for:

It is your responsibility to ensure you have receipts or proof of payments to show the My Way Technical Officer that the funding has been used for the agreed purpose.

Supporting records will usually include:

- Signed documentation by the person or organisation providing the support showing that they have provided the support and been paid for it, and
- Receipts for goods or services that have been purchased.

Copies of proof of payment documentation and receipts that you have provided will be kept in your file in the My Way office. The My Way Technical Officer cannot release any money when there are receipts outstanding for more than two advances.

Other requirements

In your agreement to receive funding through your My Way plan, you also agree to let your My Way Coordinator know about any changes to your circumstances that may affect your My Way plan and funding. An example of this is if you receive a compensation payment or leave Australia for more than six weeks. You also need to make sure you meet Commission policies, such as the Family Members as Paid Support Workers Policy.

What if you change your mind?

As with all parts of your WA NDIS My Way plan, if self-management of plan funds is not working for you, you can speak with your My Way Co-ordinator who will help you to make alternative arrangements.

ⁱ Sometimes a family member, carer or guardian is self-managing funding on behalf of a person with disability. This guide applies to whoever is self-managing the funding in the WA NDIS My Way plan.

Acceptance of Grant Funds (Terms and Conditions)

This sets out the terms and conditions for the provision of funds by the Disability Services Commission in relation to the supports and services agreed in the My Way Individual Plans for _____.

In accepting this funding, I confirm that I have discussed the following terms and conditions with the My Way Coordinator or My Way Technical Officer, and that I agree that:

- ☐ I have been given the WA NDIS My Way 'Self-Management Guide' and understand the information on selecting appropriate support workers, working with children checks, police clearances, my legal/financial obligations and guidance on quality and safeguards/protections.
- ☐ I understand my responsibility to take all reasonable steps to protect the wellbeing and safety of the person receiving the support.
- ☐ The funding will be used for the purposes as identified in the Individual Plan. I will discuss with the My Way Coordinator any funds that are not required within the period of the Individual Plan.
- ☐ I may be required to repay to the Commission any funds not spent in accordance with the Individual Plan.
- ☐ I will keep receipts and records of how Commission funding is spent and will provide them to the WA NDIS My Way local office within the timeframe agreed. I understand that the Commission may undertake an audit and will take appropriate action, such as refusal to provide further financial assistance, for any misuse of funds.
- ☐ I will notify the My Way Coordinator immediately of any material change in circumstances that may affect the Individual Plan.
- ☐ I am not currently bankrupt or subject to bankruptcy proceedings.

Person's name
(receiving the funding)

Person's name
(receiving the funding)

My Way Coordinator/Area
Manager

Signature

Signature

Signature

Date:

Date:

Date: